

Lesson-Learning in International Relations Since 1500:
Are Principled Dispute Settlements Superior?

A Proposal

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I. Context

After World War I, President Wilson - joined by many scholars and other citizens - advocated the development of international law and cooperation as a basis for world order.

After World War II, the failures of Wilson and international law led to a rejection of these approaches as naive and to the rise of a toughminded, so-called Realist school of international politics. The Realists (and later Neo-Realists) offered little hope of progress, and their understanding of international behavior dominated during the harsh realities of the Cold War.¹

In recent years, the remarkable developments in Soviet-American relations, and other constructive developments, argue for a new conceptual framework to integrate these different earlier approaches and explain both a.) the possibilities for relationship-building; and b.) the difficulties (which Wilson et al. allegedly underestimated) that must be addressed to achieve such breakthroughs.

In recent years, too, political scientists and historians have completed computer databases which inventory all international disputes (including wars) since 1817 and include data for all major wars since 1500. Thus it is possible to take current theoretical concerns about peace to these broader historical materials and build a new integration of the two frameworks (international law-building and Realism) on a solid historical foundation.

¹ This brief sketch is elaborated in John A. Vasquez, The Power of Power Politics: A Critique (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 112 - 114 and Robert O. Keohane (Ed.), Neorealism and Its Critics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

II. Problem and Subject

I believe there is a core soundness to Woodrow Wilson's project - even though many nations of the world were not yet ready for it after World War I. Thus I want to re-examine, with historical material, the development of international law and the conditions under which some nations have become ready to build enduring relationships of peace and cooperation.

Specifically, I want to analyze the claims of the Harvard Negotiation Project (HNP) that principled settlements of international disputes are superior to those based (for example) on the relative power positions of the disputants - i.e., in which the strong impose conditions on the weak that are as advantageous to themselves as they can exact.² This project will examine patterns of inter-state conflict since 1500 (intensively, since 1817) to identify enduring dispute settlements and examine whether they can be explained by the HNP model.³

This analysis will, I believe, show the HNP model is correct. Principled agreements are, in a mathematical sense, a saddle-point. They create an equilibrium. They do not necessarily eliminate future wars, but they do reduce the probability of war.

But I believe Realists and Neo-Realists will prove right about the difficulties to achieve such principled agreements in the first place. I will analyze two unusually

² The most recent statement in a series that began with R. Fisher and W. Ury's Getting to Yes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981) is R. Fisher and S. Brown, Getting Together: Building a Relationship That Gets to Yes. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988). See also Harold Saunders' review of third-party diplomacy and relationship-building, "Beyond 'Us and Them': Building Mature International Relationships." Brookings Institution. Xerox, 1988.

³ Thus, to take a modern example, the settlement of World War II should prove more enduring than the settlement of World War I - with its war guilt clauses and war reparations rather than aid for reconstruction.

important historical cases which appear to be explained by the HNP approach in the light of current theories of negotiation, third-party diplomacy, and learning to begin to develop a rigorous, cumulative understanding of how such principled agreements are achieved.

III. Activity

The large-scale historical work will begin with the augmented Singer-Small data set of 961 international disputes (including wars) from 1817 to 1976.⁴ I will analyze the data to determine which nations have, after earlier disputes, built future relationships of relative cooperation and peace and which nations experience recurring disputes concerning similar issues (e.g., Greece and Turkey over Cyprus).

To evaluate the HNP explanation of these differences, I will examine the historical development of concepts of fairness, and other principles affecting dispute resolution. This research in the history of international law will allow a rigorous coding of the sequences of disputes, and dispute resolutions, identified in the first step.⁵

⁴ This dataset is being updated, and I will work with the updated version.

⁵ Early quantitative research is reflected in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Gregory A. Raymond, "International Legal Norms and the Preservation of Peace, 1820 - 1964: Some Evidence and Bivariate Relationships" in International Interactions, vol. 8 (1981), pp. 171 - 187 and the pre-HNP work of Zeev Moaz, Paths to Conflict: International Dispute Initiation, 1816 - 1976 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982). The perceived legitimacy of claims as an important determinant of whether a confrontation will escalate, and suggestive historical evidence, are discussed in Paul C. Stern, Robert Axelrod, Robert Jervis, and Roy Radner (Eds.), Perspectives on Deterrence (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 298 - 304.

The exact nature of the principles alleged to be successful remains obscure in the HNP formulation, although these seem to involve Kantian notions of fairness, a fundamental equality of dignity, and respect for autonomy (e.g., rights of individual or national self-determination). Robert Axelrod's work in The Evolution of Cooperation (NY: Basic Books, 1984) suggests the lex talionis (tit-for-tat) is a good alternative theory to be tested alongside the HNP theory. The broadest framework to study the evolution of international relations is Myres S. McDougal, W. Michael Reisman, and Andrew R. Willard, "The World Community: A Planetary Social Process," U. C. Davis Law Review, 21:3 (Spring, 1988), entire.

Alongside the quantitative work, I will (as discussed above) analyze in depth two unusually important historical cases in which (I believe) large numbers of future wars were eliminated by principled agreements:

1. Principles of Religious Tolerance: the Westphalian World Order

No current international dispute we face in the world (e.g., in the Middle East) is as emotionally-charged - or apparently intractable - as the extraordinary massacres conducted against each other by Catholics and Protestants earlier in European history. Yet the Wars of Religion period ended, and the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) began to formalize new principles of religious tolerance. Today (except for small-scale outbreaks in Northern Ireland), Catholics and Protestants no longer massacre each other for religious reasons.⁶ It is a remarkable success story.⁷

2. Principles of Free Trade

Until the mid-twentieth century, states often sought national wealth by foreign conquest. It was common practice to use military force to secure foreign markets and unilateral access to foreign raw materials, and to defend these commercial advantages against the incursions of other nations who were similarly motivated.

Today, these causes of war appear to have been eliminated. The principles of free trade (in practice, "fair" trade, with residual protectionist policies) are universally accepted as a common normative framework for international relations. Thus, of the (approximately) 15 wars (>1,000 deaths/year) in the world, most are

⁶ An overview of research concerning ethnic disputes, and the potential role of law (formal and informal) in their settlement is Donald L. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

⁷ An overview of current research is Geoffrey Parker, "Bibliographical Essay," pp. 281 - 303 in his The Thirty Years' War (NY: Military Heritage Press, 1987). Revised edition.

ethnic disputes, revolutionary wars, and civil wars. None involves the kinds of fierce commercial competition, using military force, that characterized international politics in previous centuries.

These are major victories. But they raise pragmatic questions - i.e, how do former enemies arrive at principled agreements?

There will be, I suspect, several necessary conditions for this learning. It has not been primarily an intellectual process. Long experience, and fierce cost, in earlier efforts to dominate opponents are involved in the two historical cases: in some areas of Germany as many as 80% of the Catholics and Protestants massacred each other before the survivors agreed to tolerate one another's religious beliefs and practices. The low net benefits of imperialist, commercial competition (including the cost of the resulting wars)⁸, and the collective costs of protectionism during the Depression, surely helped to make free trade an attractive alternative.

[It is probable that third party involvement in the securing of these settlements, both among representatives of many Christian sects and by economic theorists (in the case of free trade)⁹ has been consequential.]

IV. Significance

⁸ E. g., Patrick K. O'Brien, "The Costs and Benefits of British Imperialism, 1846 - 1914," Past and Present (August, 1988).

⁹ E.g., "Man in his elemental state is a peasant with a possessive love of his own turf; a mercantilist who favors exports over imports; a Populist who distrusts banks, especially foreign banks; a monopolist who abhors competition; a xenophobe who feels threatened by strangers and foreigners... [it has been the task of economists] to extirpate these primitive instincts." Charles Kindleberger, "International Public Goods Without International Government," American Economic Review, 76:1 (March, 1986), pp. 1 - 13, p. 4. See also the emphasis upon prior scientific agreement in Richard Cooper's study of growing cooperation in international public health, "International Cooperation in Public Health as a Prelude to International Economic Cooperation." Brookings Institution. Xerox, 1986.

This work should make an important theoretical contribution to the study of international relations. The study of relationship-building (to use a phrase from the pioneering work by Saunders) is at the forefront of international relations theory. I believe this historical research will show that relationship-building can be done and, in two key cases, how it was done.

This historical research will also provide an encouraging, public message about the possibilities of building peace. There is a lesson from history about relationship-building that increases the probability of peace (e.g., Catholics and Protestants stopped killing each other once they agreed to certain universal principles involving an equality of dignity and respect) and this lesson may prove a universal truth.

Obviously it is hasty to claim the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a universal guide to non-violent relations within and between polities.¹⁰ But I do

¹⁰ Obviously, it may help if both sides accept the same principles, which have the same meaning of fairness. There may be major historical, and cross-cultural, variations in the acceptance of such universal principles. Among the issues which need to be explored to do intelligent coding of historical material are whether critical expectations (e.g., of control) associated with one's own principled behavior vary by relationship or historical period.

Tribal and nationalist ethnocentrism usually creates moral principles and obligation only within one's own ethnic group (E.g., Robert A. LeVine and Donald Campbell, Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior (NY: Wiley, 1972)). If so, the HNP model may be historically inapplicable - almost no one treated outsiders in a principled way - although increasingly well-suited to a growing universalism (or Westernization) of norms in the late twentieth century. Essays in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Eds.), The Expansion of International Society (NY: Oxford University Press, 1984) provide a broad overview of such issues. Contemporary work by psychologists also suggests several relevant complications unexplored by the HNP model of universal principle. Among the general population, for example, a desire to be fair may nevertheless produce conflict if there are different cultural norms of fairness - i.e., one could agree to treat non-Japanese foreigners fairly as if they were Japanese, but the foreigners may, by their own expectations, still feel treated unfairly: Yoshihisa Kashima, Michael Siegal, Kenichiro Tanaka, and Hiroko Isaka, "Universalism in Lay Conceptions of Distributive Justice: A Cross-Cultural Examination," International Journal of Psychology, 1988, vol. 23 (1), pp. 51 - 64. However, for a strong argument, with evidence, that equivalent ideas of key rights can be worked-out, see Alison Dunes Renteln, International Human Rights: Universalism Versus Relativism. Frontiers in Anthropology, vol. 6 (Winter, 1990) (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1990) and Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im and Francis M. Deng

expect one of the lessons of history is that - in the long-run, even for major powers - there is a hard-headed, pragmatic case to be made for such principles. Sometimes, good ethics turns-out, in the long-run, to be good international politics.¹¹

V. Results

I expect the work to produce a major theoretical statement concerning lesson-drawing, and the role of principled agreements, in international politics. Three parts of this work will be completed during the year:

- A technical scientific article will discuss the theory of principled dispute resolution and inventory the historical cases where this can be observed.

- To foster this new line of research, a codebook will be developed to describe changing conceptions of fairness, and other relevant principles of international law that can be observed in international dispute resolution since 1817. This codebook will allow systematic statistical studies of dispute resolution, and rigorous scientific controls for the effects of many variables. A project to apply this coding to the case materials supplied by diplomatic history - and begin the statistical testing and scientific controlled analyses - will be started. (The budget provides for "scanning" source material into a diplomatic history/conflict resolution database that to make further development of this line of investigation straightforward for other scholars.)

(Eds.), Human Rights in Africa: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1990).

¹¹ The wider range of issues involved in the promotion of normative change is discussed in Richard Falk, "A New Paradigm for International Legal Studies: Prospects and Proposals" in Richard Falk, Friedrich Kratochwil, and Saul H. Mendlovitz (Eds.), International Law: A Contemporary Perspective (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 651 - 702. A review of behavioral science theories addressing the learning of political institutions and systems is Lloyd Etheredge, "Government Learning: An Overview" in Samuel Long (Ed.), Handbook of Political Behavior, vol. 2 (NY: Plenum Press, 1981), pp. 73 - 161.

- A draft of a book which uses historical narratives of major cases (e.g., the end of Wars of Religion; the end of Wars of Commercial Advantage) - and is grounded in the detailed scientific analysis of a larger number of other cases - to convey this new framework to a wider audience.

Work Plan

1/15/91 - 2/15/91 Acquire computer equipment. Basic work with the Singer & Small dataset. Begin analysis of the evolution of international law and the principled agreements coding manual.

2/15/91 - 3/15/91 Complete work concerning history of international law & development of coding manual.

3/15/91 - 4/15/91 University of Michigan archives. Acquire basic source material for coding. Scan material.

4/15/91 - 5/15/91 Begin historical coding. Begin major historical studies.

5/15/91 - 6/30/91 Continue coding and historical studies. Seek

professional consultations and assess inter-coder reliability. Draft preliminary papers for professional meetings.

8/1/91 -10/15/91 Begin drafting book. Revise professional paper for submission. Complete historical coding. Begin supporting statistical analyses.

10/15/91 - 1/15/92 Complete statistical analyses. Complete and revise draft of book.

November, 1990

Lloyd S. Etheredge

Proposed Budget

A. Salary

(@ \$72,000/12 months base): 2/3 time for
1/15/91 - 6/30/91 (5 1/2 months @ \$4,000/
month); 50% time 8/1/91 - 1/15/92 (5 1/2
months @ \$3,120= \$22,000 + \$17,160). \$39,160.00

B. Travel

- Roundtrip to Ann Arbor (\$250) + 21 days
@ \$75/day = \$250 + \$1,575 = \$1,825 1,825.00

- Discussion of preliminary results:
1 international academic conference
(\$1600), 1 domestic (\$600) 2,200.00

4,025.00

B. Other Expenses

- Office expenses, telephone, xeroxing;
@ \$150/month for 11 months 1,650.00

- Books @ \$75/month for 11 months 825.00

- Research assistance 200 hours @ \$7.00/hr.) 1,400.00

- Honoraria- consulting (4 @ \$500) 2,000.00

- Manuscript typing 1,500.00

- Computer equipment for scanning, cumulative
data archiving, software 4,000.00

11,375.00

C. Indirect Costs

- Social security (7.65% employer contribution) 2,995.74

- Retirement plan (10% employer contribution) 3,916.00

- Medical (80% employer contribution \$130/month,

50% time = \$65 for 11 months = \$715)	<u>715.00</u>
	7,626.74

Sub - total	62,186.74
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D. Overhead

10%, Yale Policy Science Center, Inc.	<u>6,218.67</u>
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Total	\$ 68,405.41
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Budget Narrative

The budget calls for 2/3 time during the initial 5 1/2 months of the project and 50% time during the final 5 1/2 months.

The principal travel will be to Ann Arbor, Michigan to consult the archives of the Singer-Small Wages of War Project and the University of Michigan Library which acquired the basic reference material for the Singer-Small project. The international travel will include a presentation to the International Society for Political Psychology meeting in Helsinki in July, 1991 and a workshop at the East-West Psychology meetings at the University of Leningrad immediately following the Helsinki meetings.

Because of the complexities of diplomatic history and differing historical and cultural conceptions of ethics, I will seek professional advice and checking of my coding manual and historical sources. The budget provides for 4 experts and nominal honoraria of \$500 each.

Research assistance funds will support clerical assistance and translations of archival material.

Computer equipment funds will be used for a large Macintosh system with hard disk, scanner, Hypercard, and advanced statistical software. This system will permit source material to be scanned into a diplomatic history database; to facilitate this line of research copies will be turned-over, at the conclusion of the project, to the University of Michigan and made available at cost to other researchers. (Depending upon costs, and the eventual size of the database, it may be possible to acquire additional funds to master a CD-ROM disk.)

I expect the proposal will be submitted by the Yale Policy Science Center, which has an overhead rate at 10%.

Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator will be Lloyd Etheredge (vita attached) who currently teaches political science at Swarthmore College. Dr. Etheredge received his initial graduate training in

both political science and psychology at Yale University, where he also served recently, for two years, as Director of Graduate Studies for International Relations. During the past 18 years he has taught international relations and political behavior at several research universities, including MIT (eight years), Duke, Yale, and the University of California at Berkeley.

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Dr. Etheredge's background includes experience with both the research methods and theoretical issues involved in the current proposal. He has taught statistics and data analysis at the graduate level and has published research using multivariate statistical methods similar to those that will be employed in the current study. He has also written traditional case studies using material drawn from diplomatic history. His writings focus upon problems of learning by political institutions, especially in international relations.